

January 27, 2011

Joint Appropriations Subcommittee
General Government
Rep. Bill Beck, Chair
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59601

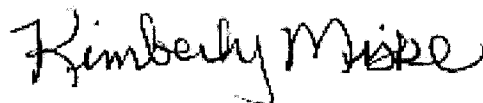
Dear Representative Beck and Committee Members:

The purpose of this letter is to ask your support for the Office of Community Service's (OCS) budget funding. Currently I am the Chair of the Montana Commission on Community Service and work closely with OCS on the important work they do on behalf of our state.

Living in very rural Eastern Montana, I truly see the need and the benefits of supporting volunteerism and service. Areas like ours have few if any organized agencies to rely on and turn to when a crisis arises or a need arises. The OCS and Montana Commission on Community Service has been instrumental in promoting, supporting, organizing and implementing many volunteer and community service events. Also, the office does great work in overseeing the state Americorps grant funds that our state programs have successfully procured and implemented. The Americorps programs are vital to our state, especially our youth. They not only learn the importance of volunteering, they are given training to develop leadership skills while volunteering and also can earn an education award for college. Service becomes a matter of the heart for these volunteers and a lifelong habit. It truly is a win-win situation for the young people of Montana, our future generation.

I am asking you to please fully fund the budget for the Office of Community Service. The benefits our state receives in additional funding and matching funding are still outweighed by the good the office does for the future of Montana.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Miske
Chair, Montana Commission on Community Service
261 Red Top Road
Wibaux, MT 59353

Chris Kolstad
295 HWY 366
Ledger, MT 59456

January 27, 2011

Representative Bill Beck
General Government and Commerce Appropriations Subcommittee

Dear Chairman Beck and members of the subcommittee,

My name is Chris Kolstad from Chester and I served on the Montana Commission for Community Service for 6 years the last one as chairman.

Our commission takes pride in funding AmeriCorps programs that work hard to make Montana a better place to live, to work, and to play in. I look at the general fund dollars that we receive not as an expenditure but as an investment in the future of the state of Montana.

My time on the committee was very rewarding because of the tangible results that our AmeriCorps programs produced. We improve not only the communities and recreational areas that we work in but also the members themselves. We often had AmeriCorps members attend our meetings, proudly wearing their carharts and testifying not just about the challenges that they had overcome but how these experiences had changed their lives.

I know you have many tough decisions to make this year but I urge you to approve this appropriation. Few if any of the programs you fund will have a greater return on your investment as the Office of Community Service.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to explain our mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ch Kolstad", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chris Kolstad
Past Chairman
Montana Commission on Community Service
Chester, Montana